



**LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Henry J. Mroz Administration Office**  
**155 Merrimack Street**  
**Lowell, Massachusetts 01852**

**William J. Samaras**  
**Mayor and Chairperson**

**Finance Subcommittee Meeting**

**Tel: (978) 674-4324**  
**Fax: (978) 937-7609**

**Jackie Doherty**  
**Vice-Chairperson**

**Wednesday, November 20, 2019**  
**City Hall Council Chambers**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**Andre P. Descoteaux**  
**Robert J. Hoey Jr.**  
**Dominik Hok Lay**  
**Connie A. Martin**  
**Gerard Nutter**

Subcommittee Members Present:

Chairperson Gerry Nutter and Andy Descoteaux  
Dominik Hok Lay was absent

School Committee Members Present:

Robert Hoey and Connie Martin

School Department Personnel Present:

Billie Jo Turner, Chief Financial Officer

---

The Subcommittee update is in response to the following motion:

Motion by School Committee Member Gerry Nutter, which was approved at the  
October 16, 2019, School Committee Meeting:

"Request a Finance Sub-Committee meeting Wednesday November 6, 2019 to review 1st Fiscal  
quarter"

Chairperson Gerry Nutter called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. The following agenda items were  
discussed:

- FY 18-19 End of Year Report
- FY19 -20 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Report

Chairperson Nutter stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the FY18-19 End of Year  
Budget report and he added that on a personal note that he believes the reason the school  
department was able to finish in the black was due to the great work of Ms. Turner and former  
Superintendent Durkin. He stated that the fact that the district finished with a balance of \$54,000,  
with \$52,000 of that being invoices that were submitted late (but were accounted for in the \$54,000)

shows that actually the district finished with about a \$2,000 balance and he doesn't think people realize how much sacrifice and time they gave.

Ms. Turner then provided the following breakdown to the Subcommittee for the FY 19-20 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Report:

- Payroll currently shows a surplus due to late hires and replacements of staff with lower paid individuals.
- Day to Day Substitute line is estimated to have a \$400,000 shortage based on current usage.
- The current Out of District spreadsheet shows the expected annual cost to be \$10,052,061 which is lower than budgeted. However, this account increases consistently and drastically throughout the year (Ms. Turner reported that after this report was completed she found out about two (2) more out of district placements costing \$70,000 each). A surplus in this line could be left in the Circuit Breaker line which is allowed to be carried over.
- The projected liability based on known retirements for sick leave buy back is \$915,518 as of October 31, 2019. Last year, the actual amount this account spent was \$1,879,640. She stated that some of the expected surpluses in other accounts need to be held to cover any shortages in this line.

Mr. Nutter stated that the CFO has prepared all sorts of numbers and breakdowns for the Subcommittee that contained a lot of good information and it is very much appreciated. He stated that we received \$13,000,000 more than we did last year and we were just notified that the state just passed another bill that overhauls the foundation formula and Lowell will even be in better shape next year.

Ms. Turner stated that the district is showing financial discipline and wants to continue to show what we are spending on financial costs. The district will be looking to come within budget and be able to replenish some of our reserve accounts moving forward. She stated that the district wants to have that money for unexpected costs such as homeless and out of district tuition, substitute usage, sick leave buy back, because all are all considered risk areas.

Mr. Nutter stated that an email they received last budget year from the City Auditor stated that at one time the circuit breaker was down to one (1) cent and when he mentioned this to other Superintendents they were not quite sure why you would do that. Mr. Nutter added that the CFO mentioned that there are some line items that show expenditures with no money shown and he asked Ms. Turner to explain.

Ms. Turner stated the Department of Education gives the City codes and we are in the process of cleaning up those accounts to make them match the codes and her office is constantly reviewing the budget so if something appears like there is no money we make that correction. She also stated that if you write a grant and become creative by taking the social workers and teachers off the grants and putting the paras on the grants you can show a great savings in Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System (MTRS).

Mr. Descoteaux echoed Mr. Nutter's sentiments about all the incredible work Ms. Turner and former Superintendent Durkin did with last year's budget.

Mr. Descoteaux made a motion to adjourn at 5:56 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Nutter. 2 yeas, 1 absent  
APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Billie Jo Turner".

Billie Jo Turner, Chief Financial Officer for  
Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent and  
Secretary, Lowell School Committee

BJT/mes